

Notes Struck by the Stars

Shridharani Gallery

The previous shows of Sanjib Singha, a Government Art College, Kolkata graduate, were titled *Elements I* and *Elements II*. In his seventh solo show, *Notes Struck by the Stars*, Singha's abstract paintings turn away from evoking earth, wind and fire and address music instead.

"I listen to Sufi music while I paint," said the rather un-effusive artist in an interview with *Time Out*. His paintings both confirm this controlled demeanour, while also betraying the ecstatic potential of Singha's music of choice.

Singha uses a roller, brushes and palette knives to paint smooth broad layers of colour, thin lines and scratched areas. As far as the music metaphor goes, one could say that Singha's layers of colour

correspond to the tone, mood, key or other formal elements of a composition, while his straight and squiggly lines correspond to a melodic phrase. He points to the rows of thin black lines on his paintings as corresponding to a musical staff. Often straight and composed, sometimes the lines are feathery flourishes or drizzles that



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look like they've been silkscreened.

Yet these paintings are not improvisational. "I think out the paintings before," said Singha, and the layers of acrylic paint attest to this. While he uses several layered colours, Singha successfully manages to preserve the distinct tone of each colour.

Singha is inspired by Prabhakar Kolte and Jackson Pollock. Kolte's influence is undeniable, but Singha has managed to create a distinctly different style. Pollock's dripped paint technique also figures, but Singha does well to retain a more controlled application, resulting in compositions that are less textural but more concerned with form.

Singha's sensitive sense of balance is his strength. This, along with his widely varied palette, makes for a pleasantly harmonious viewing experience. SS